

THE FIVE THOUSAND FED

TEXT: LUKE 9:10-17

INTRODUCTION:

1. The feeding of the five thousand is the only one of our Lord's miracles found in all four Gospels.
2. We will consider all four accounts this evening.
3. Although Luke 9:14 refers to five thousand being fed, actually there were probably at least ten or twenty thousand people fed, because Luke 9:14 says there were "about five thousand men."
4. Matthew 14:21 says, "And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children."
5. We see in Mark 6:31 that our Lord and His disciples were so busy that they did not even have time to eat. "For there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat."
6. Both Mark 6:34 and Matthew 14:14 tell us that when our Lord saw a great multitude He "was moved with compassion toward them."
7. It is Scriptures like this that should motivate us here in this great New York metropolitan area, teeming with millions of lost souls, and with so few soul-winning churches.
8. The great love and compassion of God is the key to this miracle of the feeding of the five thousand.
9. Skeptics do not believe in miracles.
10. But Mark 6:52 refers to this as a "miracle." "For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened."
11. John 6:14 says, "Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world."
12. If we believe the Bible is the Word of God, than we appreciate that this was a wonderful miracle -- our Lord fed more than five thousand people with just five loaves of bread and two fishes.

I. THE GREAT NEED (LUKE 9:12)

1. Thousands of people journeyed far into the desert, and they were tired and weak through lack of food.
2. The disciples said, "Send the multitude away" (9:12).
3. In contrast to our Lord, the disciples did not have much of a burden for the people (9:12).

4. John R. Rice preached a message from this text, and described the attitude of the disciples this way: "This old world is going to Hell and you think people can't be reached."
5. We see the same thing in the story of the Syrophenician woman who cried out to the Lord that her daughter was "grievously vexed with a devil" (Matt. 15:22). The disciples then said to our Lord, "Send her away; for she crieth after us" (Matt. 15:23).
6. We should never say, "Send the multitude away" (9:12).
7. The need is great, but people can be reached if we have faith.
8. There are millions of people right here in America today who are going to psychiatrists. Why? The churches cannot help them. Pastors are saying, "I cannot help you. The Word of God cannot help you. Even God cannot help you. Go to the psychiatrist; he can help you. Go to the government agency; they can help you, etc."
9. I heard about a man who was severely depressed. He went to a psychiatrist. The psychiatrist told him, "You need to lighten up. Have some fun. I heard there is a new circus in town and the clown is very funny. Why don't you go there and have a good laugh?"
10. The depressed man said, "I am the clown in the circus!"
11. Lester Roloff said, "People do not need pills, they need the Gos-pel."
12. Let's not give up on people. We have a God that performs miracles.
13. Spurgeon said, "We never need send the multitude away to be dealt with by the State, by the parish, or by hirelings. If we will but set to work, we shall find that the Lord makes us competent for every emergency."

II. THE GREAT TASK (9:13)

1. The task is great, but God is able. In Genesis 18:14, the LORD said to Abraham, "Is any thing too hard for the LORD?"
2. Luke 1:37 says, "For with God nothing shall be impossible."
3. In Matthew 17:20, our Lord said, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."
4. In Matthew 19:26, our Lord said, "With God all things are possible."
5. In Mark 9:23, our Lord said, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."
6. The disciples lacked faith so our Lord tried to teach them a lesson. The disciples said, "We have no more but five loaves and two fishes" (Luke 9:13).
7. In John's Gospel we are told our Lord said to Philip, "Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" (John 6:5).

8. "And this He said to prove (test) him (Philip)" (John 6:6). Our Lord wanted them to realize their dependence upon Him.
9. I think this is the #1 problem in America today – because most Americans are so comfortable and well-fed they have just about forgotten about God. They do not think they need God.
10. But this is nothing new. Mark 6:52 says the disciples had hard hearts. Matthew 14:31 says they had "little faith." John R. Rice said, "Their unbelief is strange, but no stranger than ours! How little right we have to accuse the apostles! We ask so little and expect so little from God."
11. James 4:2 says, "Ye have not because ye ask not."
12. Beloved, we will not get anywhere without faith.
13. When the disciples confessed their inability to feed the multitudes, our Lord gave this startling command, "Give ye them to eat" (9:13).
14. This is a commandment for every one who has partaken of the Bread of Life. We are responsible to pass it on to others.
15. Sinners are hungry; they are weak and sickly from Satan's spoiled food. Multitudes are dying in their sins. And so Jesus tells us, "Give ye them to eat" (Luke 9:13).

III. THE GREAT MIRACLE (9:14-17)

1. Consider this: The Lord Jesus Christ is God. As God, He could have called down manna from heaven. He could have created food instantly.
2. And He could have just as easily fed five million as He could feed five thousand!
3. There is a Biblical principle -- God's use of means.
4. The LORD said to Moses, "What is that in thine hand? And Moses said, "A rod" (Exodus 4:2). And the LORD said, "Cast it on the ground." And Moses cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent (Ex. 4:3).
5. Later on, Moses lifted up his rod, and stretched it over the Red Sea, and the sea was divided, and the children of Israel passed over on dry ground through the midst of the sea (Exodus 14).
6. It wasn't the rod -- it was faith in God.
7. David prevailed over Goliath with a sling and with a smooth stone he chose out of the brook (I Samuel 17).
8. If God used a rod, and sling and a stone, and pitchers and lamps in Gideon's army, and the jawbone of an ass in Samson's hand, and five loaves of bread and two fishes from a little boy, He can use whatever we make available.
9. God could have easily done without them, but there is an important reason God used them.

10. "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty" (I Cor. 1:27).
11. Though our gifts be small and our powers weak, yet in the hands of Christ we may accomplish much. The same Lord who multiplied the five loaves and the two fishes can still multiply our meager resources.
12. *Bring to Christ your loaves and fishes
Though they be both few and small,
He will use the weakest vessels –
Give to Him your little all.*

*Do you ask how many thousands
Can be fed with food so slim?
Listen to the Master's blessing –
Leave the miracle to Him.
Christian worker, looking forward
To the ripened harvest field,
Does the task seem great before you?
Think how rich will be the yield.*

*Bravely labor with your Master,
Though the prospect may seem dim,
Preach the Word with holy fervor –
Leave the miracle to Him. – Author unknown.*

13. Spurgeon said, "The Lord Jesus was equal to the emergency: none of the people went away without sharing in his bounty; they were all filled. Our blessed Master, now that he has ascended into the heavens, has more rather than less power; he is not baffled because of our lack, but can even now use paltry means to accomplish his own glorious purposes; therefore let no man's heart fail him."
14. The lad with the five barley loaves and two small fishes is only mentioned in the Gospel of John. It was to show us God's grace that the Lord used the lad with the five barley loaves and two small fishes (cf. John 6:6-9).
15. And it is through you and me that the Gospel is to be proclaimed today. We are to follow the example of this little lad, who had very little, but he gave all that he had.
16. He may have had little, but "little is much when God is in it." And what was the result? Everyone was fed, and there was more left over when Jesus finished than when He began (Luke 9:17). John 6:13 says, "Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the

five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten."

17. Spurgeon said: "By feeding others our stock increases." We have seen this firsthand with our faith promise missions giving.
18. Beloved, if every true born-again believer would give all that he has for the Lord, we would see millions of souls saved and this country turned around. We would see Bibles, tracts, and missionaries sent out all over the world and churches established everywhere.
19. But we cannot do this if we do not have faith in God. In Mark 9:23, our Lord said, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."
20. Luke 9:16 says our Lord "took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude."
21. The only thing the disciples had to do was to bring what they possessed to Jesus. W.H. Griffith Thomas said, "He blessed (the loaves and the fishes) and made them sufficient for people's need. Otherwise, loaves unblest are loaves unmultiplied" (*Outline Studies in Luke*).

CONCLUSION:

1. One of the great lessons in our text tonight is this: God is not asking us to give what we don't have, He's asking us to give what we do have.
2. One preacher put it this way, "God specializes in doing extraordinary things with ordinary people. You may be too big for God to use but you'll never be too small for God to use!" (Adrian Rogers).
3. Our Lord said in Luke 6:38, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."
4. I take; He undertakes. I have faith; He is faithful. I trust; He is trustworthy.